

UNIVERSITY OF TORONTO
FACULTY OF MUSIC

Katharina

Wolpe

pianist

CONCERT HALL, EDWARD JOHNSON BUILDING

WEDNESDAY, OCTOBER 18, 1972 AT 8:30 P.M.

Drei Klavierstücke, D. 946 (1828)

Schubert

Allegro assai

Allegretto

Allegro

These compositions, written a few months before Schubert's death, were subtitled "Impromptus aus dem Nachlass" when they were published posthumously. The key relationships and the contrasting styles of the three pieces suggest that they were possibly the beginning of another set of impromptus. The first two pieces have a five-part structure (ABACA) which could be described as a scherzo with two trios or a rondo form with two rather independent episodes. The A section of the first piece contrasts the keys of Eb minor and Eb major and an energetic theme in duple time with the constant repetition of triplets. The B episode (marked andante) contains new melodic material in the remote key of B major. The C episode (marked andantino) provides a lilting rhythm with the subtle juxtaposition of triple and duple meter. The second impromptu in Eb major reverses the alternation of styles in its five sections by contrasting the pastoral melody of its recurring A section with agitated sixteenth notes in the B episode and broken-chord figurations in the C section. The third impromptu is ternary in form with its outer portions in C major and the middle section in the 'Neapolitan' key of D flat major. The opening syncopated theme changes to a repetitive 3/2 rhythm in the middle section, and after a complete return of the first section, a brief coda ends with the opening motive in full chords.

Sechs kleine Klavierstücke, Op.19 (1911)

Schönberg

Leicht, zart

Langsam

Sehr langsame

Rasch, aber leicht

Etwas rasch

Sehr langsam

Schönberg's use of brevity and concentrated musical expression in his atonal period is clearly illustrated in this opus. Each piece is not a fragment but a complete musical thought. Repetitions frequently used to establish a home key are unnecessary in this atonal work and consequently their absence assists in the conciseness of the form. Integration of melodic cells replaces thematic development but does not prevent the creation of a long melodic line as shown in the first piece. Reiteration of a staccato major third serves as the cohesive element in an otherwise athematic second composition. The octave doubling of the long melodic line as shown in the first piece. Reiteration of a staccato major

third piece is a technique rarely seen in Schönberg's works. Both the fourth and fifth pieces illustrate the prevalent use of linear writing in which chords are used for interjection or points of repose. The sixth piece is based on its opening six-note chord. Against the lingering sound of this chord, short melodic motives are placed in relief. This last piece was allegedly inspired by Mahler's funeral.

Drei Klavierstücke, Op.11 (1908)

Schönberg

Mässig

Mässig

Bewegte

Op.11 was Schönberg's first consistently atonal work and is generally regarded as the beginning of his expressionistic period. The subject of the first piece is comprised of small cells, which are generally spun out like spinning-wheel yarn but constantly varied by changing accents and phrase lengths. The characteristics of the subject, its rhythm, contour and intervals, are separated and treated as compositional elements of cohesion or variety. In the second half of this piece, the subject returns with its smaller intervals replaced by the corresponding octave displacements, i.e. the second by the ninth, the third by the tenth, etc. The harmonically ambiguous interval of the tritone is prominent in the melody and vertical sound. The recurring minor third motive in the second piece gives a suggestion of the key of D minor, but neither the melody nor the harmony supports any key centre. The third piece illustrates the replacement of formal structure by a loose collection of themes. Schönberg creates a dense texture by chordal doubling which mixes tonal chord segments with atonal sound combinations and follows no systematic harmonic progression.

INTERMISSION

Fünf Klavierstücke, Op.23 (1923)

Schönberg

Sehr langsam

Sehr rasch

Langsam

Schwungvoll

Walzer

Seven years of military service separate Op 22 from Op 23 and Schönberg's period of atonal expressionism from his period of 12-tone composition. Op 23 is a mixture of atonal free elements and serialism. Two 3-note motives in the opening bars are developed into larger melodic lines by his earlier technique of manipulating the characteristics of the motives, their rhythm, contour and dynamics. He varies the pitch by octave displacement or verticalization. The opening run of 9 notes in the 2nd piece suggests a variety of melodic formal

nine notes in the second piece suggests a variety of melodic formations. Frequent time and tempo changes create rhythmic agitation that propels the movement forward. The third piece is based on an unordered collection of five notes. The opening contour of this collection is often used in note-groupings throughout the piece. Schönberg's earlier motivic techniques are extended in the fourth piece as he deals with four small cells. The free association of themes found in Op.11 seems to be favoured more in this piece than the serialistic integration of motives. Twelve-tone serialism is fully illustrated in the Walzer. By the use of this dance form, brisk rhythms, staccato, trills and tempo changes, Schönberg presents his new system as full of life, not as strict academic exercise.

Kreisleriana, Op 16 (1838)

Schumann

Ausserst bewegt

Sehr innig und nicht zu rasch

Sehr aufgeregt

Sehr langsam

Sehr lebhaft

Sehr langsam

Sehr rasch

Schnell und spielend

Schuman had many talks with the elderly Ludwig Böhrner, who had once been a well-known Capellmeister. He believed that Böhrner was the model for the eccentric Capellmeister, Kreisler, in Phantasiestücke in Callotts Manier (1814-15) by E.T.A. Hoffmann. From these two sources Schumann drew the extramusical ideas for Kreisleriana, but the music was inspired by a visit from Chopin, to whom the opus was dedicated, and his love for Clara Wieck. In 1838 opposition to Schumann's marriage with Clara seemed insurmountable, but he continued to compose works for her pianistic virtuosity. Much contrast of mood and style occurs among the movements and within the separate compositions. The 2nd piece of this opus offers variety in a five-part form (ABACA). The restful melody played in octaves in the A section is contrasted by the difficult, rapid combination of staccato and legato notes of the B episode, and the running arpeggio figures of the C section. The third piece also has contrasting sections with a reminiscence of the agitated triplet rhythms of the first number. The lyrical moment of repose found in the 4th piece is followed by an energetic 5th movement, which emphasizes melodic turns and dotted rhythms, but also changes abruptly in the middle to chordal patterns and even beats. Dotted rhythms return with ornaments, pauses and decorative runs in the slow majestic 6th piece. Only a brief chordal passage and an inconclusive cadence separate the rolling 16th-note patterns of the movement from the fractured rhythms of the 8th and last number. The playful staccato, minor key and delightful, fade-out ending of this piece suggest comic eccentricity. (S.I.H.)